SOUNDTRANSIT

**SOUND TRANSIT**
**NORTH CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT**
**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**
**AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF EIS**

**Description of proposal**
Sound Transit (the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority) is issuing this notice to advise the public, tribes and agencies that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared to evaluate the North Corridor Transit Project. Sound Transit is the lead agency under SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead federal agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Together, the agencies will prepare a combined SEPA/NEPA EIS.

The proposed project would begin at Northgate Transit Center in north Seattle and end at the Lynnwood Transit Center in Lynnwood. The project area includes two primary north-south transportation corridors: Interstate 5 (I-5), the major north-south route through Washington State, and State Route (SR) 99, a regional transportation corridor. Both corridors serve a large commuter market traveling between Snohomish and King Counties and the City of Seattle and vicinity.

The project alternatives are based on the most promising alternatives identified through an Alternatives Analysis study completed by the project: North Corridor Transit Project Alternatives Analysis (AA) Report and SEPA Addendum. The AA Report responds to Federal regulations for transit projects seeking New Starts funding (Title 49 United States Code [U.S.C.] 5309.) The AA Report also serves as an addendum under the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) to Sound Transit's Supplemental EIS on the Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (June 2005).

In addition to a No-Build Alternative, the results of the Alternatives Analysis process have led Sound Transit and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to consider for potential inclusion in the EIS light rail alternatives along Interstate 5 (I-5) and State Road 99 (SR 99).

The North Corridor light rail alternatives would operate light rail trains between Northgate and Lynnwood in two directions, 20 hours per day. Trains up to four cars long would run every 4 minutes during the peak periods and every 10 minutes off-peak. All of the alternatives would provide for a fully exclusive guideway, with no part of the alignment shared with other vehicles.

*Interstate 5 Alternatives*

Potential I-5 light rail alternatives would be located generally along I-5 with new stations proposed at NE 145th Street, NE 185th Street, Mountlake Terrace Transit Center (I-5 at SW 236th Street), and the Lynnwood Transit Center. Park-and-ride structures with up to 500 new stalls each would be located at the North 145th Street, North 185th Street, and Lynnwood Transit Center stations.

The AA process produced a conceptual I-5 alignment that Sound Transit is using to identify other potential I-5 alignment alternatives to be considered further in the EIS. The general I-5 alignment

from the AA process includes at-grade and elevated light rail sections along the east side of I-5 from Northgate to Mountlake Terrace, and in the median north of Mountlake Terrace before crossing to the west of I-5 to reach the Lynnwood Transit Center. This general alignment builds on existing park-and-ride and transit center investments as well as local service connections, avoids repeated crossings of I-5, and also avoids major reconstruction of I-5 roadways.

Variations could include alignments at different locations relative to the east or west sides of I-5 or the I-5 median, different locations for crossing I-5, or different combinations of elevated or at-grade profiles or station locations and layouts.

*SR 99 Alternatives*

Based on the AA process findings, any alignment along SR 99 would need to be entirely elevated in order to provide the capacity, reliability, and travel time savings needed to meet the project's purpose and need. The SR 99 elevated light rail alternative evaluated in the AA process begins on an elevated structure at the Northgate Link Station, continues north and then turns west over I-5, and then travels along Northgate Way and North 110th Street to the median of SR 99. This route transitions from the median to the west side of SR 99 at about North 120th Street, then operates on an elevated structure on the west side of SR 99 to SR 104 where it turns east to reach a Mountlake Terrace Station at 236th Street SW and I-5. This general alignment avoids multiple crossings and reconstruction of SR 99, and it directly serves the Shoreline Park-and-Ride. From the Mountlake Terrace Station it continues north to Lynnwood, along an alignment that is similar to that for the I-5 light rail alternatives.

The five light rail stations assumed in the AA process were located at SR 99 near North 130th Street, North 160th Street, and the Shoreline Park-and-Ride, with Mountlake Terrace and Lynwood Transit Center stations the same as those assumed for the I-5 light rail alternatives. At the Shoreline Park-and-Ride, a 1,100-stall parking structure would be developed, adding 500 new spaces. In addition, the Shoreline Park-and-Ride would include 200 spaces relocated from the Aurora Village Transit Center to create a consolidated multimodal transit hub.

Variations could be considered such as alignments at different locations relative to the east or west sides of SR 99 or the SR 99 median, or alternative station locations and layouts.

**Proponent** Sound Transit

**Location of proposal** The proposed project is located in the cities of Seattle, Mountlake Terrace, Shoreline, and Lynnwood in King and Snohomish counties

**Lead agency** Sound Transit (FTA is lead agency for NEPA review)

*EIS Required.* The lead agency has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c) and will be prepared.

The lead agency has identified the following areas for discussion in the EIS: Transportation, land use, economic activity and development potential, land acquisition and displacements, park and recreation resources, historic and cultural resources visual and aesthetic qualities, air quality (including Greenhouse Gas Emissions), noise and vibration, energy use, hazardous materials,

construction impacts, safety and security, public utilities and services, water resources, geology and soils, cumulative effects, and ecosystems, including threatened and endangered species. The following areas will also be included for purposes of meeting NEPA requirements in this combined SEPA/NEPA EIS: Section 4(f) resources, Section 106 resources, and environmental justice.

*Scoping.* Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on the proposed range of alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. Comments on the project Purpose and Need Statement are also being solicited. Three public scoping meetings and one agency scoping meeting are scheduled. The method and deadline for providing comments is as follows:

**Comment Deadline**. October 31, 2011

Comment Online: www.soundtransit.org/NCTP

Mail: Lauren Swift, Sound Transit
401 S Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104

E-mail: northcorridorscoping@soundtransit.org

At a public meeting (see below)

Public Scoping Meetings 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the following dates and locations:
Shoreline – October 11, 2011
Shoreline Conference Center
18560 1st Ave. NE
Shoreline, WA 98155

Lynnwood - October 13, 2011
Embassy Suites
20610 44th Ave. W
Lynnwood, WA 98036

Seattle – October 18, 2011
Ingraham High School
1819 N 135th St.
Seattle, WA 98133

Agency Scoping Meeting from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
October 11, 2011
Shoreline Conference Center
18560 1st Avenue NE
Shoreline, WA 98155

**Responsible official** Perry Weinberg

Position/title Environmental Affairs and Sustainability Director Phone: 206/689-4931

Address 401 S. Jackson Street, Seattle, WA 98104

**Additional Information:** An Environmental Scoping Information Report, which presents more detail on the project, alternatives under consideration, results of the AA Report and SEPA Addendum, topics for discussion in the EIS, and the project Purpose and Need Statement is available at www.soundtransit.org/NCTP or can be obtained by calling Roger Iwata at 206/689-4904 or northcorridor@soundtransit.org. The AA Report and SEPA Addendum and other project documents are also available for review at this web address.

For more information on the scoping process, contact Lauren Swift, Environmental Planner, at 206/398-5301. To request accommodations for persons with disabilities, call 1-800-201-4900 / TTY Relay: 711 or e-mail accessibility@soundtransit.org. Non-English translation services and accessible formats are available by request with sufficient notice by calling 1-800-823-9230.

Date: 9/21/11 Signature _____

*Perry Weinberg, Environmental Affairs and Sustainability Director*
*SEPA Responsible Official*